

The Xanadu* Hypertext System, expected to go into operation in 1980, is a public-access data storage system and publication medium. Writings and pictures stored within the system may be called to a user's screen within seconds. (Not the whole object, but the next part wanted, comes at once.) Users at home may access the system via telephone or Telenet, using screen terminals, printing terminals, or home computers.

Many vaguely comparable systems are being prepared for the personal and research market. However, unlike systems designed by engineers and computer people, the Xanadu System has a strong literary and liberal-arts bias.

It is a literary system, meaning that it handles connected bodies of writing; and that authors, editors, publishers, copyright and royalty all have a place.

It is a hypertext system, meaning it can handle not merely ordinary sequential text, but non-sequential writing as well. (For simplicity's sake, the word "text" below may be thought of as embracing hypertext as well.)

It is a compound hypertext system, allowing texts to be built up from other texts, which are in turn built up from other texts... and so on. This is kept simple and ruly by making sure that each document has an author or owner; nothing loses identity or is contributed by the system itself.

Indeed, it is a "grand" compound hypertext system, meaning we may conceive that very large and self-sufficient bodies of writing might live entirely within it, and that some people might use nothing else.

(From a computer point of view, it is a software system for the indexing and management of immense linked and parallel files, sequential or polymorphous, unrelated to specific hardware or future hardware innovations, to be offered by a network of licensed on-line vendors.)

THE KEY DETAILS.

Whenever a new thing is written, or a new version of something is created, or a new connection is made between two things, the result is called a "document."

A document may be of any size.

Every document has an owner.

A document may consist of text and/or links (explained below).

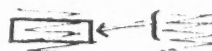
A document may be private (available to its owner and those he permits to use it) or published, in which case anyone may summon it electronically. The owner of a published document gets a royalty whenever it is used (about 5¢ an hour, divisible into teensy amounts for quick looks). An author may quote or borrow from other documents in the system any way he or she likes. The quoted material, when brought to the screen, pays its royalty to the original author.

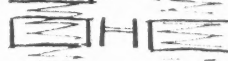
Links are parts of text, just like paragraphs or parenthetical clauses. The five literary links below may be extended to any authorial purposes we have yet discovered. These links may be used by authors who wish to connect any chunks of data on the system, including texts, diagrams, photographs, animations, musical notations, dress patterns, or any other forms of data having any number of dimensions; and within and between compound documents accreted from any combinations of these.

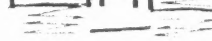
THE LINK TYPES.

The jump-link [X] is like a footnote. 

The correlink [H] puts two pieces of text side by side. 

The quote-link ["] borrows or quotes material, bringing it to a second document from its place of origin. 

The equillink [=] puts something in two places equally, neither document being its sole place of origin. 

The vanilla link [-] connects two points without direction, as in simple hypertext, movie editing, etc. 

The Swarthmore College Computing Center presents the third semi-annual hypertext conference

HYPERCON 3

"NEXT YEAR IN XANADU"*

Saturday 10 Nov 79
at DuPont Hall, Swarthmore College.

➡ The objective of this mini-conference is to familiarize interested parties with the exact structure of the Xanadu* Hypertext System. No computer background is required, though it helps to have a love of reading, a generalist outlook and a zestful appreciation of the interconnection of all ideas.

10 AM. STUART GREENE '76: "A Miracle of Rare Device: Introduction to the Xanadu Hypertext System."

Why go all-electronic. Literature as a system. Philosophy of categories (they don't last) and interconnection (there are no boundaries). Why everything has to be available instantly. Why it can.

11 AM. TED NELSON '59: "Five Little Link-Types and How They Grew: All the Author and Reader Need to Know about the Xanadu System."

How it all fits together. The many needs of readers, writers, thinkers: facilities for intercomparison, annotation, alternative versions and historical backtrack. Keeping it simple and clear. Visualization graphics for user consoles.

Noon. Lunch break.

2 PM. Roundtable discussion with MARK MILLER, ROGER GREGORY, STUART GREENE, TED NELSON: "What Kinds of Footnotes Will Drunken Lawyers Leave on the Dress Patterns? Plications of the Xanadu System: Ap, Im and Com."

➡ Those attending are urged to bring up their own specific uses and needs for the system, such as the storage and transmission of: electronic mail, teleconferencing, music scholarship, architectural graphics, Landsat photos, hyper-symphonies, etc. etc.



For further information call
Ted Nelson or Roger Gregory, 215/543-2111, or E.R. Mullins, Jr., 215/447-7506.

*"Xanadu" is a trade and service mark for computer systems and services offered by T. Nelson for 1980 delivery.
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